

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 5230

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ECON, CI, PA
SUBJ: VISIT OF CHILEAN FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: SANTIAGO 11675

SUMMARY: CHILEAN FOREIGN MINISTER CARVAJAL VISITED PARAGUAY DECEMBER 14-26. THE VISIT WENT OFF SMOOTHLY BUT WAS LARGELY LACKING IN SUBSTANCE AND ADDED LITTLE TO THE PRESENT VERY FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE HARD-LINE ANTI-COMMUNIST REGIMES OF STROESSNER AND PINOCHET. END SUMMARY.

1. CHILEAN FOREIGN MINISTER CARVAJAL MADE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO PARGAGUAY DECEMBER 14-16. IN ADDITION TO THE USUAL CEREMONIAL EVENTS, HIS VISIT INCLUDED TALKS WITH PRESIDENT STROESSNER AND FOREIGN MINISTER NOGUES AND A TRIP TO THE CONSTRUCTION SITE OF THE MAMMOTH ITAIPU JOINT PARAGUAYAN-BRAZILIAN HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT ON THE PARANA RIVER. SEVERAL MINOR BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED DURING THE VISIT, RELATING TO SOVIAL SECURITY, VISAS, TOURISM AND THE PEACEFUL USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY. THE VISIT WENT OFF SMOOTHLY BUT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN LARGELY LACKING IN SUBSTANCE. A FINAL COMMUNIQUE STRESSED BOTH COUNTRIES' FIRM OPPOSITION TO TERRORISM.

2. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE, FOREIGN
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MINISTER CARVAJAL STRESSED THAT CHILE HAD MADE A CLEAN BREAK WITH THE ANDEAN PACT COUNTRIES AND WAS NOW SEEKING CLOSER ECONOMIC INTEGRATION WITH THE OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTHERN CONE. HE REFERRED TO THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE OF PERU TOWARDS CHILE'S PROPOSAL FOR A BOLIVIAN OUTLET TO THE PACIFIC, BUT SAID THAT CHILE WOULD CONTINUE TRYING WITH BOLIVIA TO FIND

AN ALTERNATE SOLUTION.

3. A KNOWLEDGEABLE FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE TOLD US THAT THE VISIT CAME AT CHILE'S INITIATIVE FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER NOGUES AT THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN SANTIAGO LAST JUNE. HE SAID THAT CHILE'S MAIN OBJECTIVES WERE TO SEEK PARAGUAY'S SUPPORT IN A.) INTERNATIONAL FORA, B.) IN SOUTHERN CONE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION, AND C.) AGAINST PERU OVER BOLIVIAN ACCESS TO THE SEA.

4. THE MINISTRY OFFICIAL SAID THAT PARAGUAY WELCOMED A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP FOR CHILE WITH THE SOUTHERN CONE, AND HAD ALWAYS DEFENDED THE PINOCHET REGIME AGAINST INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM, BUT WOULD NOT BACK ANY PARTICULAR SOLUTION FOR BOLIVIA. IN FACT, HE CONFIDED THAT PARAGUAY WAS PRIVATELY STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ANY CHANGE IN BOLIVIA'S STATUS, FEARING THAT ONCE AN OUTLET TO THE SEA WAS GAINED BOLIVIA WOULD REVIVE ITS TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS AGAINST PARAGUAY. CONSEQUENTLY, DESPITE CHILEAN URGINGS, THE GOP WOULD AGREE ONLY TO A VAGUELY WORDED REFERENCE IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE CALLING FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF DIFFERENCES AMONG STATES OF THE REGION.

5. ACCORDING TO THIS OFFICIAL, PARAGUAY HAD NO PARTICULAR OBJECTIVE OTHER THAN TO RE-AFFIRM SUPPORT FOR CHILE'S HARD-LINE ANTI-COMMUNIST STAND. PARAGUAY'S LONG-STANDING HOPES THAT CHILE AND ARGENTINA WOULD PAVE A HIGHWAY CONNECTING PARAGUAY WITH THE PACIFIC AT ANTOFAGASTA DID NOT APPEAR TO RECEIVE ANY FRESH IMPETUS AS CARVAJAL REFUSED TO COMMIT HIMSELF PUBLICLY ON THE ISSUE EXCEPT TO
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SAY THAT IT WAS IN THE REALM OF FUTURE POSSIBILITIES.

6. COMMENT - ALL IN ALL, THE VISIT DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE ADDED MUCH OF SUBSTANCE TO RELATIONS BETWEEN PARAGUAY AND CHILE WHICH ARE ALREADY VERY WARM AS EVIDENCED BY THE STROESSNER-PINOCHET EXCHANGE OF VISITS IN 1974 AND SUBSEQUENT GOP PUBLIC DECLARATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR CHILE.
BRIGGS

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